

INFORMATION SERVICE IN THE BENUE STATE LIBRARY BOARD VIS-A-VIS THE TQM TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

The paper examines information service in the Benue State Library Board in relation to the Total Quality Management Technique. It focuses on the state Library as an organization. Research methodology used in the paper, the concept of Total Quality Management. Library operation, information service delivery, factors that hinder service delivery, finally, the paper observes that the issues of service improvement is widely acceptable to the stakeholders and therefore recommends service improvement strategies using the principle of Total Quality Management.

Background of the Study

Benue State Library Board was established as a statutory organization by the library law of 2nd November, 1982. The Board began functional library in 1985 as a parastatal under the supervision of the ministry of information and culture. It has eleven branches spread across the state and its headquarters is in Makurdi. Its cardinal function is to establish, equip manage and maintain effective, libraies through out the state.

Total Quality Management Concept

The concept of Total Management (TQM) emanated from industries which began operation in Japan after the end of world war in 1945. Japanese industrialists adopted the idea of Quality Management from renowned American quality experts such as Joseph M. Juran, W. Edwards and Deming respectively (Oakland and Portland 1998). The emergence of the concept was necessitated by the quest to reduce the level of losses drastically at end of the Wod War II.

The poor quality of product and service engineered the drive to reclaim the lost indicators of competitiveness. These fundamental indicators include quality reliability price and delivery were need for industrial reputation. The relevance of the adoption of the technique in the library information service for competitive edge is therefore not in doubt. Folk (2002) views total quality management as a problem solveing tool. The definition is contingent on the fact that, it is the most popular approach to continuous level of service quality improvement. Any organization wishing to adopt and adopt the TQM tool needs to identify the following three characteristics and compare their relevance.

- (a) Focus on serving customer satisfactorily
- (b) Systematic problem solving teams made up of front-line working tools.
- (c) Bench marking which deals with studying organization that are best at performing a particular task Tende (2010).

Total Quality Management improves productivity by encouraging the use of science in decision making. This is applicable both in service rendering and product making organizations. Total Quality Management according to Weirich and Koontz (2001:650) involves the organization's long term commitment to continuous improvement of quality throughout the organization with the active

participation of all members at all levels to meet and exceed customer's expectation. In other words, Total Quality Management is viewed as a top management effective driven philosophy as a way of organization's life.

Finally, baker (1997) defined Total Quality Management as a tool inevitably generated as, a response to the corporate survival of organizations. Total quality management in the context of this definition is an emergent tool designed to deal with quality problem which threatens the survival of the organization whether private or public organization.

Library Operations

The Benue State public library by design operates on three basic levels-the state public library, the local government public library and the mobile library respectively.

Information service delivery requires vital tools such as the library catalogue and classification. The catalogue contains the record of holdings of the library ranging from books, magazines, non-print materials, journals, resources to those organized in a particular order. The essence of the two tools is to let the users know what is in the library, where it can be found and how it may be borrowed from the library.

Information service can be grouped into reference and circulation service in the library.

Reference service has to do with books used to locate specific pieces of information. Materials in the reference unit are strictly meant for consultation and not for page to page reading of the library patrons. Information from the reference books is easily used because of its accessibility on separate shelves whose materials are arranged. Materials classified as reference books includes dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlas, maps, almanac, handbooks, bibliographical works, concordances, year book gazettes, periodical indexes annual biographies respectively. One pertinent fact is that every relevant reference material must have authority, accuracy, scope, currency and purpose as criteria.

Circulation service is concerned with processes in which libraries lend materials to patrons. The processes involve the use of a book card. Each book has a book packet inside the front or back cover of the book. Similarly, a date due inscription is either pasted opposite or above the book pocket. The card and the pocket should have the call number, the author, and the title to facilitate easy matching in checking the books in and out.

The state library uses the following Ode's procedures to lend materials to ready users;

- The book card is pulled from the book pocket
- The patron signs the card and returns to the library worker
- The library worker makes sure that the name written is legible and corresponds with the name and address in the file
- The library staff stamps the due date on the circulation card and on the date due ship in the book.
- Handover book to the patron
- Place the circulation card in a book or checkout file
- File the card into the circulation after the compilation of the day's statistic and leave it there until the book is returned.

Loaned materials are returned on due date to the desk worker for proper documentation and re-shelving.

TQM in the Library Service

Information service in the library requires continuous improvement in several areas of the library organization for improved effective and efficient service to its clientele. These areas are:

1. Training of personnel in conventional institutions of learning as well as workshop and seminars to enhance their skills.
2. Infrastructural renovation of facilities and furniture provision for users and workers
3. Financial allocation and the political will to release funds for the maintenance of the organization/sustenance of quality service in the digital age.
4. Access to electronic resources
5. Service extension to primary and secondary school to make libraries relevant to the lower level of education
6. Consultancy service to government and private organizations to generate more funds.
7. Philosophy of satisfying users who want to get value for patronage to reduce users' complaints.
8. Giving of extra service to users to make them feel important and valued.
9. Attitudinal change on the part of workers in the work place for quality service
10. Engagement of qualified workers for greater and better productivity.
11. Examination of information service process to get ride of bottlenecks to effective service delivery.

Factors Hindering Service Delivery

The state library service is plagued by problems that hinder effective service delivery, chief of which are poor facilities, outdated stock of materials, inadequate staffing and gross under funding.

Research experience further revealed the following teething problems:

- (a) The public library has only three permanent building structures and eight temporary building structures. The three building are situated at Otukpo, Gboko and Katsina-Ala while the library operates from temporary facilities in Gungul, Aliade, Oju, Igumale, Otukpo, Vabdeikya, Okpoga and Adikpo respectively.
- (b) The headquarters library is in a decadent state
- (c) The last stock books was purchased in 1991 while the latest resource materials in stock came in by way of donation from an international organization called Book Aid International (BAI) based in London. Annual budgetary funds earmarked for book purchase and resource had not been released for 16 years 1992-2008).
- (d) The initial staff strength of 100 continued to deplete from 1985 to date without commensurate replacement. The public library has staff strength of 58 at the time of this research work.
- (e) The operation of the state library is not computerized.

The above findings point out the need for application of an efficient improvement tool like total quality management.

Statement of Problem

Public Libraries in Nigeria and particularly in Benue State have poor quality library services due to factors such as poor quality facilities, ill equipped and inadequate staff, poor funding and inadequate attention by the appropriate authorities right from inception Okpoto (2002).

The poor quality of service has not only discouraged the uses of the library but discouraged the research work and brought about disinterest among students in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The persistent problem of poor service delivery has a deep seated longing for a fast track solution using total quality management too reduce the plaguing problem to the barest minimum.

Objective of Study

The paper is basically designed to examine information service techniques employed by the Benue State Library in the library service process and compare the technique with the total quality management tool in order to improve the quality of information service to the public in the public library. It is set to identify some challenges of the state Library and proffer solutions to them. The research work will provide a strategic tool for public libraries to develop good policies and strategies for information service in the 21st century.

Research Method and Hypotheses

Data collection was by the use of a structural three part questionnaire developed by the researcher. The data used in this study were derived from questionnaire distributed to thirty-five (35) patrons across the eleven branch libraries and the headquarters library. Five questionnaire were not returned. The sampled population comprised of (5) libraries whose patrons were dedicated to the regular use of library facilities. The data collected from the sampled population were analysed using chi-square (χ^2) and tables to compare opinions of respondents and determine if the library service needed the element of TQM tool for improvement. The library service covers library instructions electronic and research materials. The factors, which hindered effective information service, were examined for detailed analysis.

Two intelligent guesses were developed for the purpose of information service improvement in the public library. These hypotheses are:

- a. The online library service is not significantly better than manual library method
- b. The library organization with the knowledge of Total Quality Management does not perform better than the one without the knowledge of Total Quality Management.

Presentation of Data

In the study, thirty-five questionnaires were administered to library users/staff in eleven branches and headquarters library users/staff in eleven branches and headquarters library. The administration of questionnaire was summarized below:

Table 1: Education Qualification of Staff

Category of Respondents	No. of Questionnaire	No. Returned	Percent Returned	No Withheld	Percentage Withheld
B.Sc/ HND/MA	18	16	53.3	2	40
NCE/OND	12	10	33.3	2	40
GCE/WASSCE	5	4	13.3	1	20
Total	35	30	100	5	100

Source: field survey 2009

Table 2: Age of Respondents/Staff

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	5	16.6
20 – 26 years	7	23.3
26 – 31 years	10	33.3
Above 30 years	8	26.6
Total	30	100

Source: field survey 2009

Table 3: Assessment if Library Operations by Holders of GCE O/L and WASSCE

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	17	56.6
No idea	08	26.6
Ineffective	05	16.6
Total	30	100

Source: field survey 2009

Table 4: Assessment of Required Materials in the Library

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No available always	17	56.6
Undecided	06	20
Always available	07	23.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 5: Information Service Delivery

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactory	07	23.3
Undecided	03	10
Not satisfactory	20	66.6
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 6: Modern Provision of Information Service

Response	Frequency	Percentage
On-line	19	63.3
Manual	6	20
Undecided	5	16.6
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 7: Assessment of Required Materials in the Library

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	09	30
No	21	70
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 8: Funding of Library

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	10
No idea	2	6.6
No	25	83.3
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 9: Staff Developing Programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	73.3
Undecided	2	6.6
No	6	20
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 10: Knowledge of Table Quality Management

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	80
No idea	4	13.3
Undecided	2	6.6
Total	30	100

Source: Field survey 2009

Table 11: Computation of Chi-Square Ho

Response	Fo	Fe	$(fo-fe)^2$	$\sum(fo-fe)^2fe$
Not available	17	10	49	4.9
Not satisfactory	20	10	100	10
On-line	10	10	81	8.0
Chi-square				22.8

Source: Computed from table 4, 5, 6

Table 12: Computation of Chi-Square

Response	Fo	Fe	$(fo-fe)^2$	$\sum(fo-fe)^2fe$
No	21	10	121	12.1
Yes	22	10	144	14.4
Yes	24	10	196	19.6
Chi-square				46.1

Source: Computed from table 7, 9 and 10

Discussion of Results

From table 1, investigation showed that, out of 35 respondents 16 (53.3% were holders of first degree, HND/NCE with 4 (13.3%) were secondary school leavers. This shows that educational background and attainment are critical to comparative library service.

In table 2, 16.6% respondents were below 20 years of age, 23.3% were in the bracket of 21-26 years, 26.6% respondents were within the range of 26-31 years or 33.3% had the judgmental capacity and intellectual ability to rate operational practices according to the library best practices standard.

17 respondents or 56.65 of respondents in table three rated a current provision of reading materials to patrons effective. 8 respondents (25.6%) had no idea of rating while 5 respondents (16.65) opined that the library operation was ineffective. It was found that, the library materials satisfied the annual patrons who sat for NECO and West African Senior Certificate Examinations. The clearly shows limited impact of the library information service that requires further improvement for an impressive impact on the reading public.

Table 4 indicates that 56.6% or 17 respondents opined that needed materials were not always available, 20% or 6 respondents were undecided and 23.3% or respondents said the required materials were available for consultation. The finding in table 4 showed that, the information materials research work was scarce in the library. This agreed with the fact that the last book purchased by the Government was in 1991. This State of affairs, which discouraged research work. The service quality requires improvement in terms of quality and quantity of the library stock of materials.

Table 5: shows the criteria on information service assessment for the respondents to tick. 20 respondents (66.6%) scored the information service delivery low. The opinion was based on the inability of library attendants to give satisfactory answers to users' inquires due to non exposure to workshops/seminars to improve service skills. This reveals that information service providers need regular skill acquisition and retooling for effectiveness and efficiency.

Choices shown in table 6 indicate that 19 (63.3%) respondents chose 'on-line' service as the most effective and valuable method of providing information to seekers of information. The finding is in tune with that of Gbaje (2007) who reported that to deliver digital library collections and services today, the Web must be used.

In table 7, 9 (30%) respondents interviewed said the library environment was conducive for reading/research while 21 (70%) respondents had a contrary view. The reasons adduced by the majority of the respondents were dilapidated library structure, non functional air-conditioners, leaking roof and dusty reading halls. The finding indicates the need to improve the present library environment.

The researcher wanted to ascertain, from table 8, whether the public library was adequately funded, 3 respondents or 10% opined that, it was adequately funded, 2 respondents or 6.6% had no idea of the funding of the organization and 25 respondents or 83.3% were of the view that, it was no well funded judging from the indicators such as decadent structure and predominant old collections on the library shelves. The majority view could be supported from records of non release of budgeted funds for the library development in 2006, 2007 and 2008. The omission of capital allocation for library building renovation in 2009 approved budget estimates further gives credence on this view.

Investigation from table 4 shows that, those respondents in favour of development programmes for higher echelon of staff for higher productivity were 22 or 73.3%, 2 respondents or 6.6% took a middle course of indecision while to 6 respondents or 20% did not support the idea of staff development. This is an indication that, development programme is a sine qua non for senior

staff improvement on the job while training programme is important to middle lower level staff in order to improve service delivery in the knowledge based organization.

Finally, research finding in table 10 indicates 24 (80%) of the respondents had knowledge of the Total Quality Management as an improvement tool relevant to public library service. Four (13.3%) of the respondents had no idea of the matter while two (6.6%) of the respondents were undecided on the issue. This shows that the knowledge of Total Quality Management technique makes it relevant for innovation and improvement in the public library.

Chi-square Tool

The researcher applied chi-square tool of opinion comparison to either confirm or refute respondents' responses so as to draw inferences on the need to apply total quality management improvement technique in the library operation. Observed frequencies and expected frequencies were configured from data table and the chi-square formular used is states as:

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (fo - fe)^2}{Fe}$$

Where:

X^2 = chi-square

Fo = observed frequency

Fe = expected frequency

The researcher determined the degree of freedom (df) of the chi-square and the level of significant. The df was done by subtracting the numbers of rows from its number of columns i.e of = number of columns – numbers of rows

The critical value or level of significant indicates the value of the calculated figure chi-square value, which must equal or exceed the value. In this research, 5 percent level of significance was used to determine the value of chi-square. The value of chi-square (X^2) used here is 5.991.

Decision Rule: Where the calculated chi-square value is less than the table chi-square value, the null hypothesis (NH) is accepted. However, if calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 1: The on-line library is not significantly better than manual library service method.

Table 4, 5 and 6 show the observed frequencies made up of response for improving library information service. The highest frequencies from the tables were 17,20 and 19 respectively. The expected frequencies were calculated as thus:

$$Fe = \frac{\text{Total responses}}{\text{No of column}} = \frac{30}{3} = 10$$

From table 11, the calculated chi-square value (22.8) is greater than the table value (5.991) going by the rule, the null hypothesis (NH) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (AH) is accepted.

The rejection indicates that the traditional manual service is ineffective due to negligence over time, lack of skilled staff within the middle level category. Lack of training and no replacement of few departed skilled staff in the organization. The acceptance of alternative hypothesis (AH) is hinged on

the fact that, on-line service is an improved method that is capable of overcoming the factors responsible for ineffective library service.

Hypothesis II: The library organization with knowledge of Total Quality Management does not perform better than the one without the knowledge of Total Quality Management.

Table 7, 9 and 10 show observed frequencies from responses with respect to issues of conducive library environment, training and knowledge of Total Quality Management. The highest frequencies from the tables to deal with the research subject matter of Total Quality Management are 21, 22 and 24 respectively. The expected frequencies were calculated as follows:

$$Fe = \frac{\text{Total responses}}{\text{No of columns}} = \frac{30}{3} = 10$$

From table 12, the calculated chi-square value (46.10) is greater than the table value (5.991), applying the rule, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (AH) is accepted.

The rejection shows that, the library organization with adequate knowledge of Total Quality Management excels far in its operation than the one without the knowledge of the improvement technique. The library organization, as knowledge based set up, can use the TQM tool to overcome identified problems such as un-conducive environment, inadequate materials and ignorance techniques thereby bringing about incremental improvement. The finding is in line with that of Kurtus (2001), which indicated that modern competitive operation in every category of service is characterized by accelerating changes, innovation and massive amount of information necessitating the TQM tool.

Implications

The problem, which gave birth to the study focused on hindrances that made the Benue State Library Board to render poor quality service thereby requiring a new improvement strategic tool. To alleviate the problem, the organization should as a matter of fact apply Total Quality Management tool to all the identified militating problems for the purpose of service improvement. The Total Quality Management concept is scaffold for incremental value addition for library organization with foreseeable future.

Recommendations

For the library to do better, the solutions proffered to solving this problem include but not limited to:

1. Government should spend annually not less than 10% of its expenditure in line with the National Universities Commission's recommendation on regular procurement of relevant reading materials for the public libraries (Lanre and Adeoti 2008).
2. The library building in the head quarters and branch libraries should be given a face-lift to make them conducive for reading and research.
3. Computerization of operation this will pave way for electronic cataloguing, classification, lending, referencing and reservation. Computerization will fasten information retrieved in the library system.
4. Training and sponsorship to seminars, conferences and workshops should be encouraged and sustained. This will help to fill existing skills and equip staff sufficiently to handle daily information generation vis-à-vis dissemination.

5. The organization should mount periodic enlightenment in-house training programmes to update library officers' knowledge to keep them abreast with latest improvement techniques.
6. There should be political will and commitment on the part of government to the issue of library development in the State.
7. Well-to-do individuals/communities should embark on establishment of libraries to compliment Government efforts.

Conclusion

This paper discussed information service in the Benue State Library Board in relation to the operational improvement technique known as Total Quality Management. It tried to look at the problems that hindered effective and efficient information service in the organization.

Finally, the paper attempted to proffer solution by recommending definite turn around measures for effective information service in the public library.

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